

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER, Friday, September 26, 1958

**Fulton Lewis Jr.**

# Hucksters' Paradise

MUNICH, Sept. 25.

**A**FTER a personal, on-the-spot inspection of Radio Free Europe's sprawling plant and operation here, I am more than ever appalled at the gullibility of our purported leaders of American life back home.

This is the brain center of the RFE operation. There is some administrative and policy staff in New York City, and some transmitter operating personnel in Portugal and on location elsewhere than Munich, here in West Germany.

But this is the big show, with the news center and the tape recordings of Iron Curtain broadcasts, and the broadcasting studios and the rest of the works, and it is to this profligate establishment that RFE's fund-raising organization, Crusade for Freedom, finances a free junket for about 60 "moulders of public opinion" every year.

These are mostly the people who will head the fund-collecting state campaigns for the coming year, plus well-intentioned heads of large national organizations, with membership lists that might be tapped for contributions.

## Weekend in Paris!

They had such a junket last year; there is one in the course of preparation for next month. The guests get their round trip fare from New York free, a liberal wining and dining and sightseeing fling for 10 days including a weekend in Paris (where RFE has no operation at all) and as smooth a treatment of brainwashing as Madison avenue's top hucksters ever dreamed up.

I was accorded the full routine, complete with carefully worded and memorized spiel, and I can understand readily how an average American layman, unacquainted with the professional business of newsgathering and radio, would be impressed, particularly so when a free trip to Europe is involved.

To me, with 35 years of competitive experience in both fields, the whole thing is a ridiculous, wasteful, juvenile



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exhibition of futility to provide jobs for what is mainly a horde of free-loaders.

The New York office admits officially that the Free Europe payroll has more than 2000 full-time employees. I have reason to suspect that it is considerably higher than that, but even their own figure is incredible in terms of competitive private industry. A comparable commercial radio station with a payroll of one-tenth that number would be out of business in 30 days.

And actually, Radio Free Europe—despite all the glamorizing line by the brainwashers—is just an ordinary radio station operation, the like of hundreds in medium-sized cities all over the United States.

## Small-Town Stuff

It goes through the motions of gathering and preparing some of its purported news, largely through clipping European newspapers, subscribing to press associations and tape-recording news broadcasts from Iron Curtain transmitters. From these materials, a newsroom of 28 individuals prepares the broadcasts in English, which are then translated into five different languages and put on the air.

There is one music studio, somewhat less adequate than that in the commercial station in Canton, Ohio. In addition, there is an array of small, individual newscasting studios and some cubicles with recording equipment, which would be rated as obsolete by most American stations.

But to junketing visitors who don't know what they're looking at, except what they are told by the heavy-sell pitchman who accompanies them on their "inspection tour," this is impressive. They have no idea what is going on the air in these broadcasts, but are shown impressive stacks of recorded tapes (all in foreign languages) as evidence of the great job that is being done.

Then, having seen, they return home, full of enthusiasm, to lead the drive for "truth dollars" or to make a gift of \$250,000 from the stockholder earnings of the corporations of which they are presidents.

The truth is that they have no better evaluation of the project when they leave Munich than they had when they arrived.

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(Listen to Fulton Lewis Jr. daily at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. on KHJ Don Lee.)